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PERSIAN PAINTING of the Fourteenth Century

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with an introduction and notes by

DOUGLAS BARRETT

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THE FABER GALLERY
OF ORIENTAL ART

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*Keeper of Oriental Antiquities
in the British Museum*

PERSIAN PAINTING

of the Fourteenth Century

by Douglas Barrett

The fourteenth century is the most richly varied in the history of Persian painting. Not only has it all the interest of a formative period, but there still survive from it three or four of the greatest manuscripts in the 'classical' Persian manner, as well as some experiments of great quality, in styles which were later abandoned. The British collections are copiously rich in the representation of this period, and of the ten examples reproduced none has previously been reproduced in colour and several not at all.

The author has already published an official handbook to the medieval Islamic metal work in the British Museum and is recognised as an authority on Islamic Art. But this is a book for all who are interested in the formative period of one of the world's great arts.

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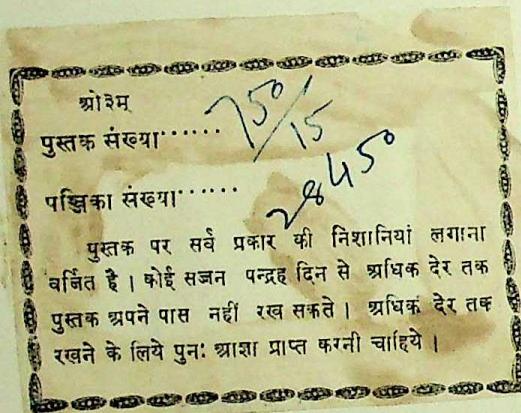
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PERSIAN PAINTING *OF THE 14TH CENTURY*

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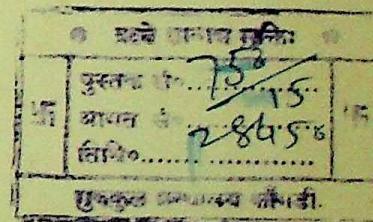
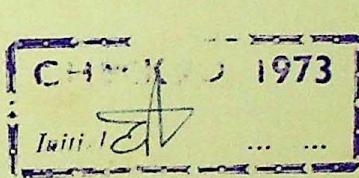
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PERSIAN PAINTING

of the 14th Century



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Introduction by Douglas Barrett

Until the Sultanate of Abu Sa'id the art of painting flourished both in Cathay and in the land of the Franks. Then the master Ahmad Musa, who learned his art from his father, uncovered the face of painting and invented the modern style.¹ Thus begins the brief history of Persian painting written in the middle of the 16th century by Dust Muhammad, himself a calligrapher and painter. There follows a bare chronicle of artists' names and their principal works, from the reign of Abu Sa'id (1317–1355) to the author's own day. Whether he had seen the famous 14th century manuscripts which he names, or if his sequence of masters and pupils represents anything more than studio gossip, we do not know. But there is no doubt that Dust Muhammad, like his Italian contemporary, Vasari, considered the style in which he himself worked to have had its origin in the early 14th century. We cannot easily disregard the judgement of a man, a painter at that, who stood so much closer to the period than we do. Certainly, the earliest illustrated manuscripts which can reasonably be called Persian, date from the years about 1300. There is moreover every indication that an original genius, who may have been Ahmad Musa or his father, played much the same part in Persian painting as Giotto, their almost exact contemporary, in that of Italy. What is not so clear is the relation of these masters and their pupils with the artists working at the end of the century. There are at least two manuscripts (Plates 8–10), dated in the last decade of the century, whose relationship to the Timurid style of the 15th century, itself the parent of Safavid painting of the 16th century, admits of no question. This is 'modern' painting indeed. The earlier masters however worked in a style, which, assured and triumphant though it was, is scarcely recognisable as Persian (Plates 2–4, 6). In any case it seems to have been abandoned soon after the middle of the century. Perhaps the accident of survival is partially responsible for this apparent change of direction—obvious to anyone who turns over the illustrations to this book¹—for few manuscripts have survived from the middle years of the century. Nevertheless, why the abrupt transition in our manuscripts seemed so smooth a development to Dust Muhammad, remains one of the cardinal problems of 14th century painting.

There was painting in Italy before Giotto, and we know enough about it to recognise that his originality was nourished by an older pictorial tradition. Whether

¹ If it should appear a little too obvious, it is because it was possible to illustrate from British collections only. Fortunately we possess three of the five finest books of the century.

there was any such continuity in the painting of Islam, we know little more than Dust Muhammad, who knew little enough. The period from the Arab conquests of the 7th century to the eve of the Mongol invasions in the early 13th century was rich in achievement in all fields of art. A few fragments of fresco and decorated pottery have escaped the destruction of war and neglect to represent Islamic painting, though the notable exception of the ceiling of the Capella Palatina at Palermo (c.1140), done on foreign soil and for an infidel patron, has left us some idea of the accomplishment of the Islamic artists as decorators on a large scale. The earliest illustrated manuscripts date from the beginning of the 13th century, nor can we be sure that book painting existed much before this period. Still less can we judge its quality or intention. It is important to remember that Islam has neither iconography nor ritual. It was therefore not necessary to use painting as a means of instruction in the Koran, as it was in Christian or Buddhist texts. The beauty and merit of a Koran lay in its fine writing and abstract illumination. Now in Persia, as in China, the calligrapher enjoyed a unique prestige, above that of the painter. It was considered that the articulation of a great script enhanced the meaning, no less than the beauty, of the written word. Writing thus became an abstract means of expression, like music, and—what is difficult for the European to understand—like music, rich in mood. It is perhaps not too fanciful to suggest that it was long before the Persian felt the need for a second, pictorial form of expression in his books.

It was however not in Persia, but in what is now Mesopotamia and Syria, in the early years of the 13th century, that the Islamic artist began to insert pictures in his popular moralities, bestiaries and fable-books. The Byzantine Empire was a neighbour with long experience in illustration, and it is not surprising that a few works show very clearly her example. But the schools of Baghdad, the seat of the Caliph, and Mosul, in North Mesopotamia, produced something original. Few of the surviving Mosul books are of outstanding quality. They derive their importance from the fact that they were the source of the splendidly decorative painting of Egypt and Syria of the next hundred years. From the Baghdad School, however, remain at least two works of genius—manuscripts, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale and Leningrad, of Hariri, a popular moral writer. These crowded scenes of contemporary life are observed with a pungent humour, which is unknown in Persian art and owes no doubt much to the vigorous realism of the Semitic peoples. Nevertheless



Plate 5. Shams listening to the Conversation of Shamat and the Fairies. (See page 12)

the pictures are controlled by that masterly sense of design which was second nature to the Islamic artist, whose hand was trained in the rigorous discipline of the scroll and the arabesque.

Perhaps Persia shared an interest in this new fashion of illustration. On the opaque glaze of his pottery, very like the smooth surface of prepared and polished paper, the Persian artist, at the great ceramic centres of Rayy and Kashan in North Persia, painted tiny scenes of courtiers, women and huntsmen, in a palette of pure and brilliant colours. Some seem to indicate the inspiration of book-painting. A few pots, decorated with scenes from the Shah Namah, the great, sprawling epic of the Persians, are related to a group of 14th century miniatures (Plate 7). The style is lively, but less ambitious in composition and more purely decorative than that of Baghdad, and there is little attempt beyond a formal tree or flower-spray to indicate the landscape scene.

In 1220 the Mongols made their first terrible raid

into Transoxiana and the eastern provinces of Persia. Ten years later the whole country was overrun, and in 1258 Baghdad itself, the spiritual capital of the Islamic world, fell before Hulagu, a younger brother of the Great Khan. This other Alaric made a permanent settlement of his fief by founding the dynasty of the Ilkhans, who from their capitals at Maragha, Sultaniya and Tabriz in Northwest Persia watched over the fortunes of the Middle East until 1355. On the other side of Asia, Kublai Khan, Hulagu's elder brother, finally destroyed in 1276 what remained of the Sung dynasty in China. Thus in two generations the descendants of the petty chieftain from the Orkhon river were astraddle the entire continent. For a brief moment in her history Asia was united. Missionaries and merchants—Marco Polo was but one of many—assembled at Tabriz for the land and sea routes to Cathay. Nor are we surprised to find the ambassador of the Ilkhans, a Nestorian monk born on the northern marches of China, parleying in

1287 at Bordeaux with the King of England. A number of the early Ilkhans professed Buddhism, and favoured the Christians, not only because Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity were the two religions of the Uighurs of Central Asia, who provided the young Mongol empire with clerks and civil servants, but also because they needed the princes of Europe as allies against the growing power of the Mamluks of Egypt. The attempts at concerted action proved fruitless. In 1295 the Ilkhan, Ghazan, coming to power with the support of the Persian faction, assumed the turban, and the Mongols were finally gathered into the fold of Islam.

The next forty years form one of the most brilliant periods in Persian history. The opening of the great trade routes across Asia brought prosperity to the cities of Northwest Persia, and a revival of patronage and national energy. Ambitious building schemes were undertaken. Pottery, inlaid metalwork, textiles, and fine books began to pour from studios and workshops. All reveal the influence of the Far East. Patterns from Chinese textiles and porcelain, for which the Mongols had acquired the taste in their old homeland, were adopted by the Persian craftsmen for their new patrons. The Ilkhans could also draw upon the whole of their domain for artists. The scribes and illuminators of their great Korans came from Baghdad, Mosul, Kashan and Hamadan. It is not surprising that in the first dated Persian book we find the older Islamic styles of the early 13th century in rather uneasy alliance with the new Chinese fashion. This book, a Bestiary in the Pierpont Morgan Library, was translated from the Arabic into Persian by order of Ghazan just before 1300. Of its ninety-four miniatures, some eleven of the more elaborate animal scenes can be counted among the liveliest and best designed of the works of the Baghdad school. The remainder¹ are summarily drawn with a quick, jagged line; there is little colour, the whole giving the impression of contemporary Chinese ink-painting. The landscape of rocks and trees, the cloud scrolls, the water with curling waves and breaking spray are familiar to those who are fond of early blue and white Chinese porcelain. The old style and the new occupy the same page in several of the miniatures of al-Biruni's History of Ancient Peoples, copied in 1507-8 (Plate I).

Ghazan and his brother and successor Uljaitu (1304-16) were assisted by an able minister, Rashid al-din, who was one of the greatest of patrons of Persian art and learning. A few miles east of Tabriz he built a complete suburb, the crumbling remains of which are still visible, which served as palace, university and scriptorium. Here he collected scholars, artists and scribes from all Asia. He was himself a voluminous writer on history and theology, and, when Ghazan contemplated a history of his own people, Rashid al-din undertook

¹ Excluding some twelve miniatures which are late insertions.

the task. After Ghazan's death Uljaitu ordered a second volume containing a general history of the world. This was completed about 1310. Two copies of the second volume, made in Rashid al-din's lifetime and no doubt at his suburb, survive in a mutilated form in the libraries of the University of Edinburgh and the Royal Asiatic Society (Plates 2-4). These are the first of the great Persian books. Most of the miniatures make little use of colour. The expression is by line, not the calligraphic line of later Persian painting, but something more abrupt and powerful. Certain motifs, like the background of the looped curtain, belong to the ancient tradition of the Eastern Mediterranean. Far Eastern influence is everywhere apparent in the details of landscape and architecture. What the exact nature of this Far Eastern influence is, it is difficult to say. Certainly not the classical ink-painting of the Sung and Yuan dynasties, as we know it. We must imagine some fiercer derivative among the Central Asian peoples, something like the earlier Uighur frescoes, a style which, tamed and coarsened, survived late in the Buddhist painting of Tibet and Mongolia. But when all this is said, we have said little. These miniatures elude the categories of the historian of art. The main fact about them is their originality. The artists who painted these pictures were aware of the great destiny of the Mongols, and have seized anything to hand to express the tremendous dignity of their subject. The wily old barbarian of the steppe, to whom the cities of the South were merely the inexhaustible source of gold-plate, women and silks, had foretold the inevitable seduction of his people by the ancient civilization of Persia and China. The insidious charm of China conquered the men of Kublai Khan almost without effort. In Persia northern energy and southern refinement fused for a generation, and in these splendid pages and those we are about to consider, left a monument to Persian and Mongol alike.

Uljaitu died in 1316 and was succeeded by his son Abu Sa'id, whose reign, according to Dust Muhammad, witnessed the birth of modern painting. Rashid al-din was disgraced and executed in 1318, but his son Ghiyath al-din regained the uncertain favour of the Ilkhan and restored much of the former splendour of his father's suburb, the artists of which continued to make considerable contribution to the progress of painting. This is apparent in two famous manuscripts. The first and best known is the large body of paintings, called after its first European possessor, the Demotte Shah Namah. This was a vast work and must have taken some years to complete, especially as the painting may have been interrupted during the troubled times which followed the death of Abu Sa'id. Several styles and several hands are evident in this work. A number of pictures represent an extension of the style of Rashid al-din's book (Plate 6). The Shah Namah artist makes use of a richer palette.

His figures and landscape are more closely knit, both in design and mood. Here in place of the cold passion of the earlier book, a sort of fury seizes the actors in the epic and their environment alike. In our picture the great bole of the tree seems to feel the force of Rustam's arrow. In other pictures, the consummation of this style, the protagonists face each other across a split and writhing tree, and nature herself joins in the tremendous conflicts. On the other hand, some of the throne-scenes have the formal dignity and richness of colour reminiscent of Timurid painting at its best. Other pictures, like the Funeral of Isfandiyar in the Metropolitan Museum, are in black and white. Here the wild gestures of figures beside themselves with grief have a pathos never again found or attempted in Persian art. Taken all in all, for the book is too ambitious not to be unequal, the Demotte Shah Namah contains the most impressive series of paintings ever done in Persia.

The second book is by the nature of its subject a quiet production. It is a copy of the *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, now in Istanbul. Unfortunately, this fable-book is rather inaccessible and not completely published, but there is little doubt that it easily holds its own beside the Demotte Shah Namah. The style is uniform throughout and gives the impression of a single master. Also it is difficult to speak here of a Far Eastern influence, as in the other books. Rather has the artist seen and really understood classical Chinese ink-painting, and has used his knowledge to make an original contribution of his own.

The dating of these two manuscripts and their relation to each other have always been difficult questions. According to Dust Muhammad, Ahmad Musa illustrated a *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, and the greatest work of the master Shams al-din, who was Ahmad Musa's pupil and worked in the third quarter of the century, was a Shah Namah. There are difficulties in identifying these works with our manuscripts.¹ Both are rooted in Rashid al-din's book, the *Kalilah wa Dimnah* much less so that the Shah Namah, some of whose miniatures (Plate 6) need not be much later than 1520-50. Again the *Kalilah wa Dimnah* has a more 'modern' appearance, is more forward looking. Nevertheless, if we accept it as the work of a great inventive painter, and if we concede that the stylistic development and variety of the Shah Namah was spread over a long period, it is possible that the latter book was finished by Shams al-din after 1550.

With the death of Abu Sa'id in 1555 the Ilkhanid dynasty ended. Two Mongol families, the Chupanids and the Jalairids, took advantage of the confusion to seize Tabriz and Baghdad. Chupanid power was brief.

¹ These difficulties are ingeniously met by Mr. Eric Schroeder (*Ars Islamica VI*, 1939), who supports his view by an analysis of the change of fashion in hats, an engaging form of iconography which would have appealed to the Mongols.

Tabriz was finally taken by Uwais, the second of the Jalairids, who from 1558 to 1577 held both Tabriz and Baghdad, which his sons and successors, Husain (died 1582) and Ahmad, succeeded in retaining until 1586. Dust Muhammad's list of artists runs on—masters and pupils—with any break. All these artists worked for the Jalairids. Unfortunately, none of their works have survived until we reach the last decade of the century, and, to fill in the gap, we must leave the main tradition of the Tabriz-Baghdad school and look at two other groups of paintings, one of which is notable for its quality, the other for its fairly certain provenance.

The first consists of a number of Shah Namahs, of small format and painted in a truly 'miniature' style (Plate 7). A rich palette of pure colour is used on a gold ground. The drawing is neat and delicate. The warriors wear Mongol armour and plumed hats. Large flower-sprays form the setting to the scenes. 15th century pottery and that of Sultanabad of the first half of the 14th century afford the closest parallels. One gets the impression of the simple pictorial conventions of the 15th century brought up to date. Here is vigour and charm, but none of the bigness and fury of the Tabriz masterpieces. They are however, to be attributed to some western centre, perhaps Tabriz itself or Baghdad, for there is no reason why the 'miniature' style should not have persisted alongside the Mongol grand manner, miniature in size only. They are not likely to be much later than the middle of the century.¹

The second group comes from South Persia. Here, holding Shiraz in Fars and later Isfahan, the Persian family of the Injus had been governors for the Ilkhans. About 1325 they became more or less independent rulers. A dispersed Shah Namah, dated 1540-1, came from the library of Qawam al-din Hasan, the vizir of Fars, who was minister to Abu Ishaq, the last of the Inju family, a friend of scholars and protector of the great Shiraz poet, Hafiz. Other Shah Namahs in the same style are dated 1550 and 1555. The 1550 Shah Namah, in Istanbul, is the earliest dated example of this poem. Several other books have survived (Plate 5). They make a curious series. The figures, with their curls and rouged cheeks, again similar to the 15th century pottery painting, are placed on blue, red or yellow backgrounds—the latter perhaps an imitation of the more luxurious gold. The newer elements—lotus-patterned textiles, cloud scrolls, and occasionally a suggestion of 'Chinese' landscape—are also introduced. All are obscured by clumsy drawing and gauche composition.

In 1555, another fief-holding Persian family under the Ilkhans, the Muzaffarids, captured Shiraz, and in 1556 Isfahan, when Abu Ishaq was executed. This family held both places until 1595. The first Muzaffarid, Mubariz, was an austere ruler. He even closed the

¹ But see note to Plate 7.

[continued on page 24]

Plate 1

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE FALSE PROPHET AL-MUKANNA' BESIEGED BY THE ARMY OF THE CALIPH AL-MAHDI

A page (folio 112 verso) from a manuscript of al-Biruni's *al-Athar al-Baqiyah* or
History of Ancient Peoples, copied by Ibn al-Qutbi in A.H. 707/1307-8 A.D.

Size: $9\frac{3}{4}'' \times 5\frac{3}{8}''$

Library of University of Edinburgh (Arab 161)

The 24 miniatures of this manuscript, like those of the Bestiary in the Pierpont Morgan Library, nicely illustrate the survival of the 15th century styles of Mesopotamia, and the intrusion of pictorial motifs drawn from the Far East. Here it is the school of Mosul, in North Mesopotamia, rather than that of Baghdad, which has left its mark. The real heir to the Mosul style, in painting as in inlaid metalwork, was the Mamluk dynasty of Egypt and Syria, and it is to contemporary Mamluk painting that Plate 1 owes its figures and formal composition. The folds of the drapery show the spiral scrolls (the Schnörkelfalten of German scholars) which were so elaborately formalised by the Mamluk artist.¹ Indeed several of the miniatures which have architectural backgrounds only are indistinguishable from Mamluk work. But whereas the only concession to the Far East in the latter was the use of the lotus pattern on costume and curtains, the Tabriz artist, in several of these miniatures, has set his Mamluk figures in a detailed Far Eastern landscape of rocks and trees. In Plate 1 the landscape, if such it can be called, is timidly introduced, and consists merely of an horizon of a double line and a few pebbles and tufts of flowers. The Chinese cloud-scroll is more confidently adapted to the design and colour of the picture. One gets the impression that two artists worked on this miniature, one doing the figures and architecture in the Islamic tradition, the other handling the landscape, the very idea of which was a new element in picture-making. This is not unlikely, for we know from signed Mughal manuscripts of the 16th and 17th centuries that studios were 'organised in a manner reminiscent of Rubens' 'factory'.

An interesting late copy of this manuscript is in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Arabe 1489).

¹ These distinctive spiral scrolls are of some importance. They are a feature, together with Mamluk flying turban-bands and Far Eastern curling waves, of the lovely little *Kalilah wa Dimnah* in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Suppl. pers. 1965). This is a Persian book, at least it is written in Persian, and was presumably copied at a Northwest Persian centre in the early years of the century.

وَقَلَ مِنْ خَالَفَ وَشَرَعَ لَهُمْ حَيْثُ مَا أَتَى بِهِ مِنْ ذَكْرٍ وَقَضَى جُمُوعَ الْمُهَدِّدِي وَأَسْوَلَ الْأَرْبَعَةَ
عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً حَتَّى حُوَصَّرَ وَهُبَلَ فِي سَنَةِ نَسْعَ وَسِنَنَ وَأَوَّلِهِ الْجُنُونَ وَكَانَ أَجْرَقَ فَنَسَةَ مَا



أَخْطَبَهُ إِلَيْلَاتِي مِنْتَكُ فَيَحْقُولُ أَحَابَهُ فَوَلَهُ فَأَيْمَرَقَ وَلَمْ يَأْتِ لَهُ مَا أَرَى أَدَمْ الْمَلَائِكَةَ
بَلْ فِي حِدَى الْأَشْوَرِ وَلَطَعَنَ رَأْسَهُ وَأَنْدَلَ بِلَامِدِي أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِي وَهُوَ مِنْ ذَبَابَ وَلَمْ يَشْعِي
بَنَافِرَ الْهَمَرِ دَشَوْنَ بِإِسْنَهِ مُسْكَنِهِنَ مُشَخَّلِيَنَ بِغَلَاظِ الْأَنْهَارِ لِلْأَسْلَامِ وَقَدْ عَرَجَتْ أَخْبَارُ فَزْ
الْفَازِسِيَّةِ إِلَى الْعَرَبِيَّةِ وَهِيَ مُسْتَعِصَمَاهُ فِي حَسَانِي بِأَخْبَارِ الْمَسْيَهِ وَالْمَارِطَةِ

لَعْنَاهُمْ رَبُّ الْعَوْنَى
فَرَأَهُوا فَأَهْرَنْ يَعْرُفُ بِالْجَسِينَ مِنْ صَوْرَ الْجَلَاجِ

Plate 2

MUHAMMAD REPLACING THE BLACK
STONE IN THE KA'BA

A page (folio 45 recto) from a manuscript of Rashid al-din's *Jami' al-Tawarikh*
or History of the World, copied in A.H. 706/1507 A.D.

Size: $4\frac{7}{8}$ " \times 10"

Library of University of Edinburgh (Arab 20).

Rashid al-din took the greatest precaution to preserve his History for posterity. Careful copies on large Baghdad paper¹ were made in Arabic and Persian, and every year one of each was sent to an important city in the Ilkhanid dominions. Nevertheless, the first volume, the History of the Mongols written for Ghazan, has survived only in later copies, the earliest of which, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, dates from the end of the 14th century. The copyists worked too much in the style of their own day to give any idea of the original. Of the second volume, the History of the World written for Uljaitu, there are four contemporary manuscripts. Two, in Istanbul, are dated 1314 and 1317. Unfortunately, only a few of the miniatures are in the style of Plates 2-4, the remainder having been added in the 15th century.²

There are however few documents in Persian painting more important than the two fragments owned by the University of Edinburgh and the Royal Asiatic Society. They have had some remarkable adventures. It is usually assumed that when they were written they formed part of the same book, even though one is dated in the course of Rajab, A.H. 706/6 Jan-5 Feb., 1507, and the other A.H. 714/1314-15. Assuming that the earlier date is the date of transcription,³ it seems unlikely that a manuscript of some 500 folios would take seven years to complete, especially as we know the highly organised methods of book production in Rashid al-din's suburb. A comparison of the margins in the two fragments seems to clinch the matter. The margins of the Edinburgh fragment consist of a thick blue line enclosing a thick and two thin red lines. Between the two thin red lines is a thick yellow line (Plates 2-3). The margins of the Royal Asiatic Society fragment consist merely of two thick red lines (Plate 4). Framing the pictures in both fragments there are, of course, additional blue and gold rulings. It may be objected that different margin-cutters were responsible for different chapters or sections of the book. But the Edinburgh fragment contains, save for some eleven odd folios, the whole of the Life of Muhammad, and seven of these folios are in the Royal Asiatic Society fragment. It seems then that the two fragments did not originally belong together. Nevertheless, they seem to have been brought together before their arrival in England. Both are paginated by a late hand, and though together they make up more than two-thirds of the highest folio number (299),

¹ The size of the Baghdad paper was about 20" by 14". The pages of our two fragments (Plates 2-4) have of course been trimmed.

² There is a fifth manuscript, now dispersed, which was said to be dated 1318. Few, if any, of the illustrations are contemporary. Many are justly considered modern.

³ It may be the date of transcription or of composition, or, indeed, of both.



no folio of one fragment is found in the other. In the Edinburgh fragment are two interesting statements in a late hand, firstly that 'this book contains 503 folios', (Folio 40 verso. top margin), and secondly, that 'this book contained 503 folios, of which one half, that is 150, is stolen' (Folio 155 recto). It seems then that the two books, mutilated perhaps at the successive lootings of the suburb which followed the downfall of Rashid al-din and his son, were later brought together¹ to make one volume of 503 folios. Then in its turn suffered outrage, but was united again in this country at the beginning of the last century, having lost almost 100 folios in the interval.

There is also a manuscript containing selections from the Diwans of six famous poets, in the India Office Library, whose miniatures, though poor in quality, are similar in style to those in the Edinburgh and Royal Asiatic Society fragments. It is dated A.H. 715-4/1315-15.

¹ The Royal Asiatic Society fragment having passed through the library of Timur's son, Shah Rukh, whose seal it bears.

Plate 3

ABOVE : BATTLE BETWEEN ABU'L-QASIM AND MUNTASIR BELOW : MUNTASIR'S ARMY ON THE ICE

A page (folio 122 recto) from a manuscript of Rashid al-din's Jami' al-Tawarikh or History of the World, copied in A.H. 706/1507 A.D.

Size: 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

Library of University of Edinburgh (Arab 20).

The miniatures in the Jami' al-Tawarikh are framed in a narrow rectangle and set one or two to a page. The general tonality is silver and grey: a great deal of actual silver paint is used for accessories and modelling. Restrained use is made of olive-green, scarlet and light blue. The cool effect is that of the beautiful contemporary pottery of Sultanabad, painted in white slip on a grey body with touches of blue. With these simple means a wide range of expression was achieved. The artist could decorate one of his big pages with a splendid swagger (Plate 3), giving at the same time a wonderful picture of the Mongol cavalry, their wiry ponies, plated armour, brocaded clothes and fantastic hats. He enjoyed the effect of banners and lances bursting through the gold ruled frames into the wide margins. In his quieter moods (Plate 2) the simple grouping of the strangely arrested and expectant figures is at once dignified and moving. In other scenes these same figures thrust across their narrow space with crooked fingers and imperious gesture. They have something of the terrible authority of King Lear. There is a reflective beauty in the landscape scenes (Plate 4). One or two pictures are of landscape only.

وأحد المتصور سحورة على هذه القبر ورقة الناس أثاثاً بين يديه ودكك أيسلر قورنأش تجاجي البني كل ساقية المتصور وعنة
وردة العلاج ذاتها العنكبوتية التي يعيش في ساقية العوار وندا لكتار وأهتم بالنصر تجاه بارليزية لمحاريلانيلوك وأفظار
لكتارك ولونة المغير ضربة كعب الافت والقلعة حكمي الشابد والقصرة لستقرعه ووضع المتنبئين لسرير الأذنور خاتمة مفترمه
سے، فما كانت بهم رسنة ودخلتون في طاعته ومشئون خدمة لوابي إلى بلاد المكان، فازدواجية من عنده وقللوا خطأهم بالسيف



وَمُسْتَوْدِعُ الْأَنْوَارِ ثُمَّ يَعْوَادُ وَقِيمَةً لِلْأَوَّلِ، أَنَّ الْحُكُومَ قَدْ مُواْلِيَةً بِمَا ذَهَبَ إِلَيْهَا الْكَافِرُونَ عَزِيزُكَ كَوَافِرُكَ



السُّورِ كَلَّا كَلَّا إِنَّمَا يَرَوْكُمْ لَتَهْتَمُونَ بِالشَّرِيفِ وَلَمْ يَرَوْكُمْ مُّهَاجِرِيَّةَ وَمَا
مَاتَ أَمْ مُنْشَدِّيَّةَ لِغَزَّةِ وَبَحْرِيَّةِ إِلَيْكُمْ أَكْفَافُ اشْفَاقِ وَظَاهِرُ اشْتَاءِ وَسَكَنُ عَامِ اعْتَدَاهُ الْمَلِكُ وَقَالَ شَعْرٌ
حَكَرْ دَنَاسَ حَوْلَ دَرْبِ حَوْبَتِ لَكَ هَبَّيْنِ وَعَشَ كَوْنَشَتِ
مَنْ كَانَ لَكَ خَلْدٌ نَّذِيكَ كَثُرَ الْمَلَلِيَّةَ تَكَ وَرَحْلَلِ الْمَلَلِ خَوْفَ مَنْ كَانَ يَكْلُمُ مَسَرَّهُ مَنْ تَرَكَ الْعَنْوَزَيْشِ

Plate 4 (opposite)

THE MOUNTAINS ON THE WAY TO TIBET

A page (folio 22 recto) from a manuscript of Rashid al-din's *Jami' al-Tawarikh*
or History of the World, copied in A.H. 714/1314-15 A.D.

Size: $5\frac{7}{8}$ " $\times 10\frac{1}{8}$ "

Royal Asiatic Society (No. 1).

Plate 5 (page 3)

SHAMS LISTENING TO THE CONVERSATION
OF SHAMAT AND THE FAIRIES

A page (folio 166 verso) from a manuscript of Sadaga ibn Abi'l-Qasim's novel
Kitab-i-Samak-i-'Ayyar. First half of 14th century.

Size: $5\frac{1}{2}$ " $\times 5\frac{9}{16}$ "

Bodleian Library (MS. Ouseley Add. 581).

The three volumes of this novel are among the more attractive of a series of some nine books associated with the Inju family, which ruled Fars in South Persia from about 1305 to 1356. Three of the books¹ were written during the lifetime of Mahmud Shah Inju, the founder of the family, who was put to death in 1335-6 by order of Arpa Khan, a fainéant successor of the Ilkhan, Abu Sa'id. His death was followed by a confused period, but his youngest son, Abu Ishaq, who had been granted Isfahan about 1340-1, became lord of Shiraz in 1342-3. He held both territories until ousted by the Muzaffarids, from Shiraz in 1355 and from Isfahan in 1356, when he was executed. 'In truth', says Hafiz, 'the turquoise ring of Abu Ishaq flashed finely, but it was a transitory prosperity'.

The miniatures of the novel are painted on yellow and red backgrounds, with a preponderance of the former. The decorative conception of the figures and the robes with arabesque designs are common on 13th century Persian pottery and metalwork. The trees with their large trefoil leaves come straight from contemporary Sultanabad pottery. In other miniatures the figures wear Mongol armour; and clumsy imitations of Far Eastern mountains, clouds, phoenixes and lotus-patterned stuffs are frequently introduced. Flying turban-bands and the scrolled folds of garments² suggest also some Mamluk influence.

The best of these Inju miniatures have little more than a pleasant decorative quality. The general impression is of an inept imitation of the metropolitan styles by artists unused to, and indeed uninterested in, illustration. It is strange that the painting of Shiraz and Isfahan remained so provincial, for the latter was a great architectural centre and the former, the home of Hafiz, produced some of the finest writing and illumination of the century.³

¹ A *Shah Namah*, dated 1350, in Istanbul; a *Shah Namah*, dated 1333, in Leningrad; a *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, dated 1333, dispersed.

² The former in the Bodleian novel, the latter in the Tabari in the Kevorkian Collection.

³ For example the wonderful Koran in thirty folio volumes, in the Shiraz Museum, written in A.H. 745/6/1344-5 A.D. at Shiraz and probably for the wife of Abu Ishaq, who donated it to the shrine of Ahmad ibn Musa.



Plate 6

THE DYING RUSTAM, WHOSE HORSE LIES
IMPALED IN THE PIT, WITH HIS LAST
STRENGTH SHOOTS SHAGHAD

A page from the Demotte Shah Namah. About 1320-50 A.D.

Size: $6\frac{1}{2}$ " $\times 11\frac{1}{2}$ "

British Museum (1948 12-11 025); [Bernard Eckstein bequest].

Acomparison of this picture with Plates 2-4 will show how closely related the style of this master of the Demotte Shah Namah was to that of Rashid al-din's artists. If it is set beside the identical subject in the Edinburgh fragment of the Jami' al-Tawarikh, it will be equally clear how the style has expanded in complexity and power. This artist or other artists working in this style were responsible for a number of other pictures in the Demotte Shah Namah. Together they form the strongest argument against Mr. Eric Schroeder's dating of the Shah Namah as a whole to the third quarter of the century. Mr. Schroeder is forced to assume an old-fashioned artist trained in Rashid al-din's scriptorium working with the more modern masters controlled by Shams al-din. This is certainly possible, for alongside the original work there was doubtless a great deal of routine copying in the studios. It is however difficult to believe that an artist, who far from being a copyist was the creator of some of the finest pictures in the book, was working in a style already outmoded. It seems preferable to abandon the identification of the Demotte Shah Namah with the work mentioned by Dust Muhammad, and to see the various styles of the great book as each part of the consistent progress of that revolution in painting which had its origin in the scriptorium of Rashid al-din. Its later stages, which may have continued past the middle of the century,¹ are unfortunately not represented in British collections.

In an album in Istanbul (TopKapı Sarai, 1720) there are four miniatures from a Shah Namah. One only has been published,² and Mr. Schroeder sees in it a page from the Demotte Shah Namah, and Ahmad Musa as the possible artist. Be that as it may, the published miniature does seem much closer to the Istanbul Kalilah wa Dimnah than to the Demotte Shah Namah.

¹ A few miniatures in a Kalilah wa Dimnah in Cairo, dated 1343-4, are related to the fully developed Demotte Shah Namah style.

² G. Migeon. Manuel d'art musulman. Paris 1927. vol I. fig. 72.



Plate 7

ISFANDIYAR UNHORSES GURGSAR BY
LASSOING HIM

A page from a Shah Namah. First half of 14th century.

Size: $7\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $5\frac{1}{4}$ "

British Museum (1948 12-11 022); [Bernard Eckstein bequest].

There is a group of at least four of these 'small' Shah Namahs, all of similar format, but differing somewhat in style. They are neatly written, the text being in six or four columns. The miniatures are set one or two to the small page and are remarkable for the vivacious drawing of the tiny figures and the jewel-like effect of the clear colours against the gold ground. Most of them have the simple landscape—a few large flowers and piece of greensward—and the straightforward lateral grouping of Plate 7. One book, however, the so-called Schulz Shah Namah, is much more ambitiously organised. The figures are elaborately composed against a rich landscape. It is the Demotte Shah Namah in little. It is no doubt for this reason that Mr. Eric Schroeder¹ has suggested that the artist responsible for the Schulz Shah Namah was 'Abd al-Hayy, who he thinks was chief-assistant to Shams al-din on the Demotte Shah Namah. This would date the Schulz Shah Namah to the third quarter of the century, perhaps later. A date about the middle of the century seems preferable, the other 'small' Shah Namahs being somewhat earlier. There is, however, every reason for thinking that the Tabriz-Baghdad school was responsible for these books.

¹ *Ars Islamica* vi 1939, p. 158.



Plate 8

PRINCE HUMAY AND PRINCESS HUMAYUN FEAST TOGETHER IN THE JASMINE GARDEN

A page (folio 42 verso) from a manuscript of the Poems of Khwaju of Kirman,
copied at Baghdad by Mir 'Ali ibn Ilyas of Tabriz in A.H. 798/1396 A.D.

Size: $11\frac{11}{16}$ " $\times 7\frac{1}{2}$ "

British Museum (Or. 18115).

This manuscript contains three poems of a Khamsah, composed by Khwaju of Kirman (1281–1352) in imitation of the more famous Khamsah of Nizami (1140–1205). Two of the poems are signed and dated by the great calligrapher Mir 'Ali of Tabriz; the Humay and Humayun on Sunday 4 Rabi'a II, A.H. 798/16 Jan. 1396, at Baghdad, and the Kamalnamah on the 28 Jumada I, A.H. 798/10 Mar. 1396. The love story of Humay and Humayun, to which Plates 8–9 are illustrations, was composed at Baghdad in 1331–2 in honour of Abu Sa'id and Ghiyath al-din, Rashid al-din's son. Khwaju was also patronised by Abu Ishaq of Fars and the Muzaffarid family. One of the miniatures is signed by Ahmad the Jalairid's artist, Junaid, whom Dust Muhammad calls a pupil of Shams al-din. There is no reason to doubt that all the miniatures are by this master.

This book faces in both directions. It is the first masterpiece of the Timurid period, prefiguring the achievement of those painters who worked for the book-loving descendants of Timur in the 15th century. At the same time it retains much of the rich variety of landscape of Mongol painting. It is the strongest argument for Dust Muhammad's view, that 'modern' Persian painting had its origin at the court of the Jalairids.



Plate 9

PRINCE HUMAY WOUNDS PRINCESS
HUMAYUN IN COMBAT, THE LOVERS
NOT RECOGNISING EACH OTHER

A page (folio 51 recto) from a manuscript of the Poems of Khwaju of Kirman,
copied at Baghdad by Mir 'Ali ibn Ilyas of Tabriz in A.H. 798/1396 A.D.

Size: 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ "

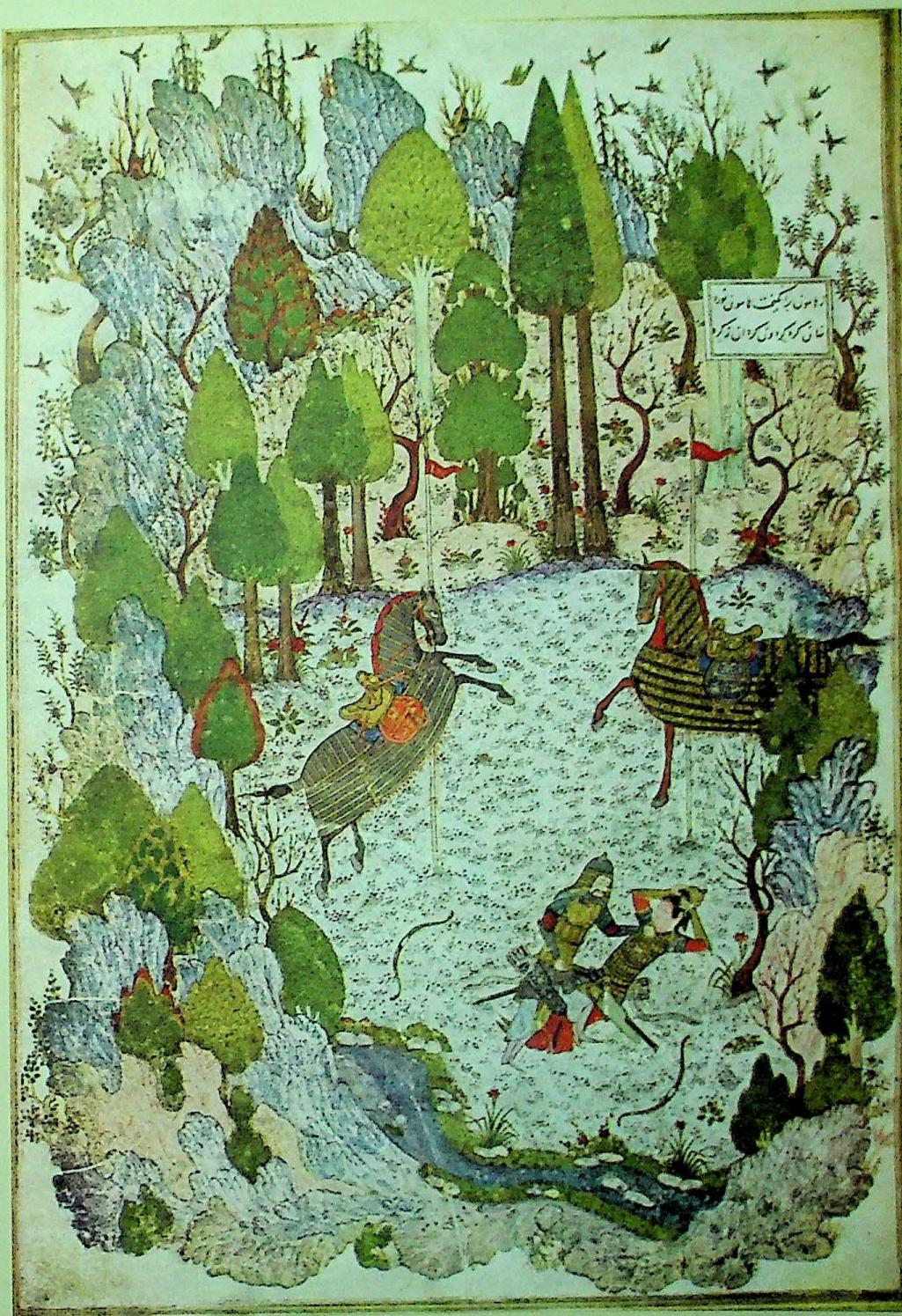
British Museum (Or. 18113).

Persian poetry oscillates between two themes—a perpetual *carpe diem*, a paean to youthful love and beauty coupled with a humorous resignation to age and decay, and a mysticism deriving comfort and refreshment from a union with nature. The landscape of Persia is of a stark beauty, punctuated at long distance by water, foliage and flowers. Therefore the garden has always meant many things to the Persian: and the *hortus conclusus*, the enclosed garden in which nature may be quietly contemplated or life greedily enjoyed, is the especial image of his poets and painters.

The garden scenes in the Poems of Khwaju (Plate 8) make an admirable foil to such expressions of the contemporary vision of Europe as the *Paradiesgartlein* in Frankfurt. Though it is extremely unlikely that the art of Persia had any influence on the last flowering of the Gothic genius, there is a strange similarity of mood between the painting of the bourgeois society of Northern Europe and that of the aristocratic court of Baghdad. Both isolated and carefully observed forms of trees and flowers, and recomposed them in an ideal landscape which ignored the scale and atmosphere of nature. But the world of Western imagination, in spite of its warmth and tenderness, seems almost prosaic beside the magic evoked by the Persian painter at his best (Plate 9).

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Plate 10

BAHMAN HANGS FARAMURZ ALIVE ON A GIBBET AND SLAYS HIM WITH ARROWS

A page (folio 165 verso) from a manuscript Miscellany, copied by Muhammad ibn Sa'id Abdullah in A.H. 800/1597-8 A.D.

Size: 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

British Museum (Or. 2780).

This Miscellany, beautifully written and illuminated, contains four works, the Garshasp Namah, the Shahanshah Namah (finished on 14 Rajab, A.H. 800/2 April, 1598), the Bahman Namah (finished in the last ten days of Rabi'a I, A.H. 800/12-21 December, 1597), and the Kush Namah (finished in the month of Safar A.H. 800/not later than 21 November, 1597). The Kush Namah was finished 'by the help of the most gracious King', who may be Ahmad the Jalairid, who having returned to Baghdad in 1594 held it until forced to retire by Timur in 1401. Another part of this manuscript, containing the Shah Namah, is in the Chester Beatty Collection: it contains neither date nor name of scribe.

The Miscellany has been attributed to Shiraz on the strength of its stylistic similarity with two famous books¹ copied in 1410-11 for Iskandar, the grandson of Timur, and governor of Fars from 1409-15. This again raises the question of the contribution of Shiraz to the new manner of painting. The work of the Muzaffarid artists, if it is adequately represented by the Shah Namahs of 1370-1 and 1393-4, did not rise above the level of mediocrity. There are, however, two books of great beauty which are commonly given to Shiraz, a Kalilah wa Dimnah in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Anc. f. pers. 577), which shares some details of style with the 1393-4 Shah Namah, and an Anthology in Istanbul, dated 1398/9 and copied by a scribe from Fars. Now painting in Persia was a court art, in which style and methods were handed on from master to pupil; and fine painting presupposed generous court patronage. It is unlikely that such patronage existed at Shiraz, whose history during this troubled period is in any case a blank. It seems more reasonable to accept the Jalairid court as the provenance of these two books, and the two Shah Namahs as provincial copies of the Baghdad style. It is equally probable that the 1410-11 Miscellanies were the work of Jalairid artists attracted to Shiraz, after the death of their old patron, Ahmad, by Iskandar. Once patronage was removed, Shiraz reverted to her old gaucherie, apparent even in some pages of the Berlin Anthology of 1420 and the Bodleian Shah Namah, copied for Ibrahim Sultan.²

It seems best then to attribute the present book to Baghdad.

¹ The Gulbenkian and British Museum (Add. 27261) Miscellanies.

² The most acceptable interpretation of this difficult period seems, on our present knowledge, to be that of Mr. Eric Schroeder in his *Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art*. Harvard University Press, 1942, pp. 51-74.



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continued from page 5]

wineshops, an action of which Hafiz remarks resignedly: 'It is the season of piety and time of abstinence'. His piety was however rewarded elsewhere. In Shiraz in 1558 he was deposed and blinded by his son Shuja, who pursued a different ideal until his own death in 1584. It was during Shuja's reign, in 1570-1, that a Shah Namah, now in Istanbul, was copied at Shiraz. The twelve miniatures in this book set the main problem of 14th century painting. Here for the first time is painting which Dust Muhammad and his contemporaries would surely recognise as the parent of their own style. The Persian artist finally restricts himself to those few visual conventions, the manipulation of which seems to have given him complete satisfaction for over two centuries—the high horizon of spongy rocks, the ground scattered with tufts of flowers, the sky gold or deep blue as of high noon, and the doll-like figures. Unfortunately, this book is of very poor quality, and we are left with the question whether it is the unworthy representative of a new local style, or merely a provincial copy of a style invented at the greater centres of Tabriz and Baghdad. It is difficult to imagine the Shiraz artists responsible for the Inju manuscripts originating anything. Also all the painters mentioned by Dust Muhammad worked at Tabriz and Baghdad. Shams al-din, the pupil of Ahmad Musa, learned his art in the reign of the second Jalairid, Uwais, who was himself a poet, calligrapher and painter. The son of Uwais, Ahmad (1382-1410), one of the most attractive personalities of the period, surrounded himself with celebrated calligraphers and illuminators. One of his favourite painters was 'Abd al-Hayy of Baghdad, a pupil of Shams al-din, who was also the master of Junaid, who is probably the painter of our Plates 8 and 9. Ahmad was not incapable of contributing a black and white drawing to a book himself. It seems more reasonable then to conclude that the new painting arose in the luxurious courts of Tabriz and Baghdad, and that the early works which would have shown the decline or, it may be, the deliberate rejection, of the Mongol vision, and the emergence of a genius purely Persian, have been lost to us. Mongol energy was not entirely spent and left some of its strength and variety to the great books of the end of the century. One contribution permanently directed and enriched Persian painting—the idea of the landscape.

During the last twenty years of the century Persia was assailed by another barbarian from the east, the Barlas Turk, Timur the Lame. Having conquered East Persia, he undertook the subjection of West Persia in 1386, when he took Tabriz from Ahmad, who retired to Baghdad. Shiraz was captured in 1387. After a

period of general confusion Timur appeared again before Shiraz in 1393, and then marched to Baghdad. Ahmad fled to Egypt, but returned in 1394. This irrepressible prince succeeded in holding his capital, with occasional adroit withdrawals, until his death in 1410. Timur's bloody career has little point and his wars are events merely in Persian history. His only significance is that he carried off to adorn his capital at Samarkand artists from Shiraz, Baghdad and Tabriz, who—'Abd al-Hayy was of their number—contributed much to the brilliant period of his more genial successors of the 15th century.

Several books have survived these troubled years. A Shah Namah, in Cairo, dated 1395-4, is signed by a Shiraz calligrapher. It is difficult to say where it was illustrated, since Timur had occupied Shiraz in the spring of 1393, but it certainly follows closely the 1570-1 Shah Namah, though of better quality. Near to it stands a beautiful Kalilah wa Dimnah in the Bibliothèque Nationale.¹ A second book, The Wonders of the World, in the same library was written for Ahmad the Jalairid in 1388. This is an indifferent work, and illustrates the danger of assessing the quality of the various schools by odd survivals. For all these books are completely overshadowed by a manuscript of the poems of Khwaju of Kirman, written in 1396 at Baghdad by the great calligrapher Mir 'Ali of Tabriz. It is now in the British Museum (Plates 8-9). Junaid, whom we have already mentioned as a pupil of Shams al-din, signed one of the miniatures—the earliest example of a signature on a Persian picture—and there can be little doubt that this splendid masterpiece was destined for the hands of Ahmad himself, as was perhaps also the Miscellany dated 1397-8, in the British Museum (Plate 10).

In the manuscript of the poems of Khwaju of Kirman the unique vision of Persia is finally apparent. It is for us the first book in which Dust Muhammad's 'modern' style is fully realised. This style involved a rejection of those very qualities which gave the painting of the Mongol period its magnificent scale and power. It is as if, to compare him again with his Italian contemporaries, the Persian artist, having commanded the passion and grandiloquence of Giotto, now chose to paint with the poetry and reticence of the Siennese. He deliberately reduced his formal vocabulary so as to intensify its expressiveness, schooling his hand by the discipline to which he was used in his script. Thus turning more frequently to the illustration of his lyrical and mystical poets, he was able to translate their ineffable moods into pictorial symbols as simple as they were exact.

¹ See note to Plate 10.

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